

# ⚭ The INQUIRER

£1

[www.inquirer.org.uk](http://www.inquirer.org.uk)

The voice of British and Irish Unitarians and Free Christians Issue 7950 3 November 2018

## 100 years since Armistice



PROCESSED

NOV 06 2018

U LIBRARY

### Where is peace?



# The INQUIRER

THE UNITARIAN AND FREE CHRISTIAN PAPER

Established 1842

The Inquirer is the oldest  
Nonconformist religious newspaper

**"To promote a free and inquiring religion through the worship of God and the celebration of life; the service of humanity and respect for all creation; and the upholding of the liberal Christian tradition."**

*From the Object passed at the  
General Assembly of the Unitarian and  
Free Christian Churches, 2001*

The Inquirer is published fortnightly  
by The Inquirer Publishing Company  
(2004), Registered Charity 1101039.

**Editor** M Colleen Burns MA

46A Newmarket Road

Cringleford

Norwich NR4 6UF

ph: 01603 505281

e: [inquirer@btinternet.com](mailto:inquirer@btinternet.com)

**Proofreader** Sarah Reynolds

**Cover** Armistice Day Celebrations  
at a munitions centre. Painting by  
Frederick Etchells via Wikimedia  
Commons

**Articles** express the views of their  
authors. Submissions are welcome  
and may be edited for content and  
length. They should be emailed or  
typed and should be the author's  
original work.

**Subscribe** Annual subscriptions are  
£35 with discounts for bulk orders.

For information, contact the

**Administrator**

Steven Bisby

71 Earlesmere Avenue

Balby Doncaster DN4 0QD

ph: 07764 486711

e: [admin@inquirer.org.uk](mailto:admin@inquirer.org.uk)

**Advertise** for £6 per column cm, on  
3-col page, plus VAT or £7.50 per  
col cm, on a 2-col page. A one-page  
supplement is £200. One column on  
a 2-col page is £100, on a 3-col page,  
£75. A5 fliers may be inserted for £95  
plus VAT.

**Births, marriages and deaths** are  
50p a word plus VAT.

**Find out more** about Unitarians

[www.unitarian.org.uk](http://www.unitarian.org.uk)

or email [info@unitarian.org.uk](mailto:info@unitarian.org.uk)

The General Assembly, Essex Hall

1-6 Essex Street

London WC2R 3HY

ph: 0207 2402384



**Never think that war, no matter how necessary, nor how justified,  
is not a crime.**

**– Ernest Hemingway**

## Faith in Words

Contributions for the annual 'Faith in Words' Christmas issue are  
also welcome. Please send prayers, addresses, meditations, art work,  
photographs – anything that relates to the birth of Jesus, Solstice,  
Hanukkah, Winter or the other ways we mark the season.

New contributors are most welcome. For more information or to submit  
material, email: [Inquirer@btinternet.com](mailto:Inquirer@btinternet.com) Or, send typed contributions  
to the editor's postal address on left.

### Jesus in words

Son of God? Son of man? Miracle worker? Prophetic teacher? So much  
is believed about Jesus, yet still so much is unknown.

As Frank Walker wrote in the 6 October *Inquirer*, Thomas Sheehan is  
among scholars who are considering the evolving legacy of Jesus.

What is your view of Jesus? How does that relate to the Unitarian faith?

Has your view changed through the years?

Share your ideas with readers of *The Inquirer* in December's 'Faith in  
Words' issue. It can be just a few sentences, or up to 400 words. Please  
send typed contributions via post or email: [inquirer@btinternet.com](mailto:inquirer@btinternet.com)

**Contributions due 10 November**



# A century of wars stole peace after the 'war to end all wars' was fought



*As part of Victory Celebrations in Britain after the First World War, a captured German Feldkanone 16 field artillery gun with a destroyed barrel was exhibited on the Mall, London. Photo by Horace Nicholls via Wikimedia Commons*

**By Feargus O'Connor**

On 11 November 2018 the centenary of the end of the First World War will be commemorated worldwide. Let us reflect on the truly terrible scale of death and destruction it caused.

- Approximately 10 million combatants were killed.
- 21 million were wounded, disabled, lost limbs or blinded.
- Up to 8 million were confirmed missing.
- Around 8 million civilians lost their lives.
- Unknown millions mourned the deaths of loved ones.
- Millions of innocent animals, including 8 million horses, were sacrificed.

Unknown billions in economic damage resulted. In France alone around 3 million buildings and millions of hectares of agricultural land and forest were destroyed.

The environmental damage of the war was incalculable.

Its eventual legacy was unprecedented political and economic dislocation, the rise of Fascism and the even more devastating global catastrophe of the Second World War, which itself claimed around 60 million lives.

It has been estimated that the total number of lives lost in wars over the last century is well in excess of 100 million men, women and children. We are still living with the tragic human and environmental consequences of these murderous conflicts.

## Remembrance

After the Great War, the 'war to end all wars', many people were so shocked by the scale of the slaughter that Remembrance Day was introduced as an act of solemn remembrance of the millions who had died in that hitherto most terrible of conflicts. But should not this fitting recollection of the dead of past wars not be, in the philosopher AC Grayling's words, 'an instrument for a further and greater purpose, namely to question war itself'?

We must ask ourselves whether any war in history has ever truly been worth fighting.

Should it not be about remembering the utter waste, horror and futility of war itself? Should it not, as Grayling argued, remind us of 'war's causes: ugly faiths, intolerance, lust for

power and revenge, mutual hatreds prompted by historical accidents of colour, custom or culture'?

As I recently walked round the Imperial War Museum I vividly felt the connections across the generations: the memories of those who had lived and loved, the men and women who had laughed, cried and died, caught up in the ultimate blasphemy of war.

I opened the book *The Roses of No Man's Land* by Lyn Macdonald. I relived the experiences of Claire Tisdall of the Voluntary Aid Detachment – the ambulance column. Claire's brother had been killed at Ypres. She really hated the Germans – so much so that when she saw German survivors rescued from a sunken Red Cross ship she got angry that these Germans had been rescued out of the water and given the clothes 'knitted for our Tommies'.

Yet, when faced with an individual German soldier whose life she could save, she showed feelings of tender humanity. Being able to speak fluent German, she was often asked to talk to injured German prisoners of war. Seeing some ambulances full of wounded Germans she noticed one pale-faced boy look up at her.

'Pain, pain', he cried.

Claire pulled back the blanket. She saw, to her horror, a spouting artery. She instantly knew what to do, dragged his clothes aside and pressed the affected area with her thumbs.

'Haemorrhage! Haemorrhage!' she shouted.

The trained nurse then took charge. But what were Claire's feelings?

'It melted a little of my hatred... I felt quite differently towards Germans after that.'

Other nurses showed feelings of equal humanity towards the German war wounded. One British POW tells the story of a remarkable German hospital sister, called by the allied prisoners 'Schwester Kristina'. Kristina herself did not care about the nationality of her patients and did everything possible to care for them and save their lives.

There were many nationalities in one ward. Each evening

*(Continued on next page)*



# We must admire heroes of conscience

(Continued from previous page)

Kristina would call around the ward and offer water to all her patients. She was no gifted linguist but made a special effort to address each of her patients in a few words of his native language, such as 'Good night, Englander'. The soldiers would return the compliment and say in a chorus in their broken German: 'Gute Nacht, Schwester'.

An Australian nurse, Sister Elizabeth Nordsvan, also had vivid memories of seeing young German prisoners.

'I had charge of a ward of Germans but they were nearly all kids. We had boys of 14 crying for their mothers! The British army was very severe. They wouldn't allow the boys to write home and tell their mothers that they were sick... So I got a list of their addresses and I wrote to all their mothers and let them know... and when I came home from the war lots of the mothers wrote to me to say how grateful they were. After all, those mothers were just as upset about their kids as we were about ours. Some of the other British nurses said I was pro-German – I wasn't... I never hated the Germans. I just loved people – and especially poor sick kids.'

This shows us how important individual human relationships are to nurturing the latent humanity in each one of us. It is not the collective nation that we engage with but fallible individual human souls. Kristina and Elizabeth saw our common humanity in all their patients.

What is it that gets us through the horrors of war? It is not the jingoism of cheering crowds or the patriotic ardour of those who handed out white feathers to men who did not or could not enlist. Nor is it blind hatred of a supposed and always collective enemy. Rather it is the goodness of caring individuals who see beyond the barriers of nationality and race and proclaim the intrinsic worth and dignity of every human being. It is surely they who save us from cruelty and barbarism and give us hope for our common future?

That awareness of the goodness of ordinary people and spirit of true humanity are captured in one of Siegfried Sassoon's most moving war poems, composed in November 1918,

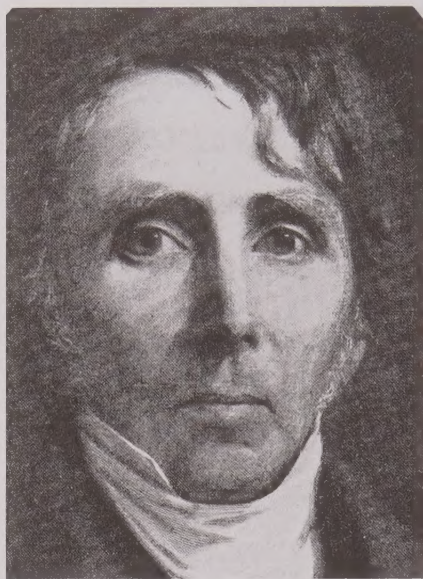
*Reconciliation.*

*When you are standing at your hero's grave,  
Or near some homeless village where he died,  
Remember, through your heart's rekindling pride,  
The German soldiers who were loyal and brave.*

*Men fought like brutes; and hideous things were done;  
And you have nourished hatred harsh and blind.  
But in that Golgotha perhaps you'll find  
The mothers of the men who killed your son.*

## Blessed are the peacemakers

President Dwight D Eisenhower, former Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces during the Second World War, spoke memorably about the human, material and financial costs of war. 'Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies in the final sense a theft from those



William Ellery Channing

who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its labourers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.'

It is so easy amid the horrors of war to forget our common humanity, to become brutalised and lose sight of the terrible effects of war on ordinary people, whether conscript soldiers or civilians. The majority of victims of modern war are now civilians. When politicians and military spin-doctors speak about 'collateral damage' they mean ordinary men, women and children – like us.

War, according to the Victorian Quaker Parliamentary John Bright, is 'the combination and concentration of all the horrors, atrocities, crimes and sufferings of which human nature on this globe is

capable'. What serious student of the evils of wars throughout the ages could refute this conviction?

The root causes of war, according to William Ellery Channing, are our human propensity for evil and greed, passion for superiority and power, false patriotism that puts our own nation above all others and an upbringing and education which serve to glamourise warlike exploits.

Anticipating the uncompromising ethical stance of Bright in opposing the Crimean War in the face of populist clamour demanding war, Channing wrote that in comparison to war 'all other evils fade'.

'Let us teach that the honour of a nation consists not in the forced submission of other states, but in equal laws and free institutions, in cultivated fields and prosperous cities; in the development of intellectual and moral power... magnanimity and justice, in the virtues and blessings of peace.'

Channing saw the remedies as well as the causes to be of a moral and religious nature. He suggested that rulers should take more pride in the welfare of their people than in the exercise of political and military power.

'We should honour nations for their free institutions, wise laws, promotion of humane education, benevolence and justice.'

According to Channing, we must learn to admire what we in our age call the heroes of conscience, human rights, the martyrs for peace and freedom.



For the sake of our future global safety and very survival is it not a pity that Trump and Putin do not heed the moral vision of William Ellery Channing?

*The Rev Feargus O'Connor  
is minister with Golders  
Green and with St Albans  
Unitarians.*



# News in brief

## Theology Conference booklets available

Booklets containing all six lectures given at the second Unitarian Theology conference of recent times, are available to order. The conference was held over two days at Mill Hill Unitarian Chapel in Leeds in October 2017. The speakers were (on God): Rev Ant Howe, Dr Jane Blackall and Rev Lewis Connolly; and (on Unitarian themes): Rev Dr Ann Peart, Dr Justin Meggitt and Stephen Lingwood. Titled Unitarian Theology Conference II the booklets can be ordered by sending a stamped, addressed A5 envelope to: the Rev Jim Corrigan, Flat 11 Lincoln Court, Station Road, Padiham, Lancashire BB12 8EW. Each booklet weighs 122g and second class postage costs £1.26. There is no charge for the booklets themselves, as they were subsidised by a grant from our General Assembly.

— Jim Corrigan



## Unitarians UK Facebook page unveiled

The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches (GA) launched a new Facebook page on 1 November. It's called 'Unitarians UK'.

Currently many congregations are using Facebook with great success to take the Unitarian message to new people, to publicise their services and events, and to grow their congregations. The new Unitarians UK page will support these efforts and provide shareable photos, news items and information about Unitarianism.

The primary aim of the page will be to spread the word about Unitarianism to the general public. This will be the first official Unitarian Facebook page and – unlike the many excellent volunteer-run Unitarian Facebook groups – will be run and moderated by staff at Essex Hall.

You can help by 'liking' and 'following' the new Facebook page, by sharing posts and generally spreading the word. We have some catching up to do compared to other denominations. The Quakers have 10,300 Facebook followers, the Church of England have 78,000 and the Humanists a whopping 212,000! As for the Unitarians... well, watch this space!

If you have any questions or ideas for the new page, get in touch with the new Communications Officer at Essex Hall, Rory Castle Jones at [rcastlejones@unitarian.org.uk](mailto:rcastlejones@unitarian.org.uk). You can find the page at [www.facebook.com/UnitariansUK](https://www.facebook.com/UnitariansUK)

## LEST WE FORGET

### How can the Unitarian movement in this country best commemorate the centenary of the Armistice of 1918?

The management committee of The Nightingale Centre have been giving some thought to this matter as The Florence Nightingale Convalescent Home for Men was erected as, 'The National Memorial to the men of the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches who fell in the war 1914 - 1918'.

'If I Should Die' is a powerful poem of consolation written by Rupert Brooke in 1914. It intimates that those hopes for the best that life has to offer remain - 'A pulse in the eternal mind no less'. Poetry helps us wrestle with our feelings. Maybe in our remembering we should focus on the hopes for peace and for a better tomorrow of those who lost their lives in the horror of that war. And not just remember but to recognise that faith as alive within their National Memorial. The Nightingale Centre as the embodiment of those hopes for a better tomorrow and with the words of Rupert Brooke resonating in the life of the Centre.

*Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day,  
And laughter, learnt of friends and gentleness  
In hearts of peace...*

We hope to raise awareness that we have a National Memorial and one of which to be proud. A living memorial alive to those hopes for a better world.

On the centenary of the Armistice we invite all congregations as an act of remembrance to join the many individual *Friends of the Nightingale Centre* in helping to financially support the Centre into the future. Perhaps District Associations would also wish to consider joining *the Friends* in memory of the fallen of those congregations that are no longer active.

**For those congregations and any individuals who wish to join the *Friends of The Nightingale* please contact the Centre for further details:-**

**Email [info@thenightingalecentre.org.uk](mailto:info@thenightingalecentre.org.uk); Telephone 01298 871218.**



# Climate expert: Warming is

In October, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a report saying humanity has just 12 years to limit global warming to  $1.5^{\circ}\text{C}$  – before its effects are felt in extreme weather, poverty and climate migration.

So, *The Inquirer* checked in with **Geoff Levermore**, a member of Styal Unitarian chapel, who was lead author for the (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report in 2007. The panel won the Nobel Peace Prize that year.

*Since retiring, Prof Levermore (GL) has continued research and travelled widely giving invited lectures on climate change. John Midgley (JM) conducted this interview.*

**JM. Professor Levermore, the IPCC's new report is out. What's changed since the 2007 report?**

GL. Let's start with the Paris Agreement of 2015. It was negotiated by 196 countries and 181 have become party to it. Its long-term goal is to keep the increase in global average temperature to well below  $2^{\circ}\text{C}$  above pre-industrial levels and to limit the increase to  $1.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ . This would substantially reduce the risks and effects of climate change.

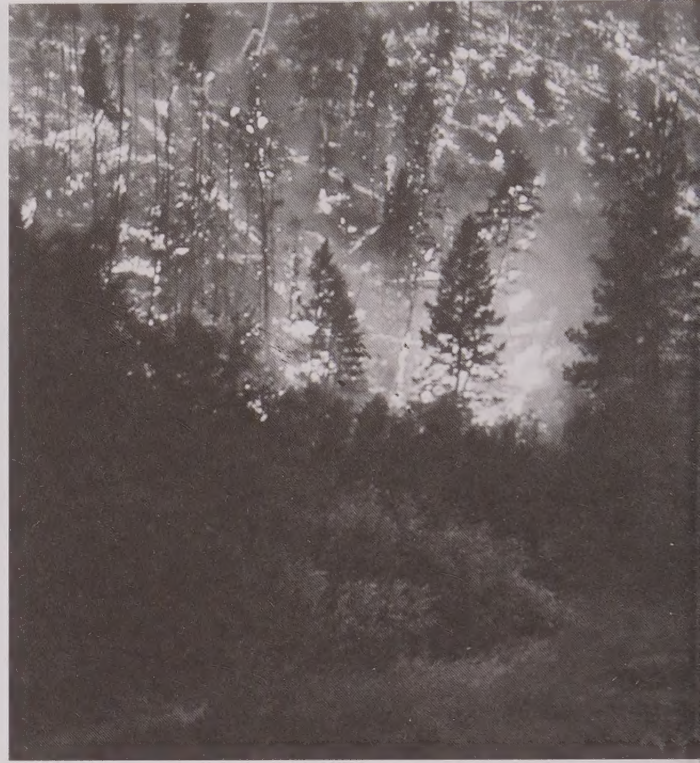
Getting the world's countries to agree is an encouraging development although some countries, such as the USA, have not signed up. Donald Trump said he would not sign, and he has not. However, at the recent international meeting on climate change in Bonn there was an alternative US delegation, with the important backing of states such as California which do support climate change action and are making a very good effort. The agreement in Paris was very welcome news, but there is also scepticism as words are easy whereas action is less forthcoming.

## More urgent action is required

The Agreement talked of trying to keep to the limit of  $1.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ . We have already gone over the  $1.0^{\circ}\text{C}$  limit. So this latest IPCC report emphasises more urgent action that is required.  $\text{CO}_2$  emissions must decline by about 45% from 2010 levels by 2030 reaching net zero around 2050. Previously people had been considering the  $2^{\circ}\text{C}$ , with measures to reduce  $\text{CO}_2$  emissions by about 20% by 2030 and to reach net zero around 2075.

**JM. I understand you've been giving invited lectures on climate change. Who have you been speaking to, and what have you been saying?**

GL. I've mostly been giving keynote speeches at conferences on climate change and my particular speciality, the built environment. I've been talking to academics, young and old, emphasising the need for action and research to support the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. One point I make that



*Deer seek refuge in a lake from a fire at Bitterroot National Forest. Department of Agriculture*

we must leave two-thirds of our fossil fuels in the ground if we are to have a 50% chance of staying below the  $2^{\circ}\text{C}$ . This means considerable changes in our lifestyle, much more renewable energy use and more efficient homes and equipment.

## I am a hypocrite

I also talk of the anti-science movement, climate deniers and the ethical issues, that we must reduce our own consumption. I accept that I am – to an extent – a hypocrite in that I fly to overseas conferences. But my solar panels, electric car and more walking and eating less meat hopefully offset things a bit. My last talk was to young researchers in Lille and they were very receptive to the need to reduce carbon emissions, especially when buildings can be made more efficient with standard technology, although the overall costs will be high.

**JM. We hear of gigantic forest fires, tremendous hurricanes, floods, rising sea levels, death and destruction as well as migration – millions on the move. Is this the future that awaits us? Are we fighting a losing battle?**

GL. Climate change is often examined over 30-year trends as opposed to weather, which occurs daily. However, the climate models all show more severe weather effects. As the air and water of the world warm up so they have more energy and therefore more power which often shows itself in more extreme catastrophes.

**JM. There is no shortage of political opposition to meaningful climate action. We know President Trump's view, and Australia's prime minister, Scott Morrison, has said there was no money for 'global climate conferences and all that nonsense.' How do you react?**

GL. Part of my talks are about climate deniers and I mention Prof Dan Kahan's work on cultural cognition. He says that what people believe about global warming does not reflect what they know, it expresses who they are. There are parallels



# more challenge for humans



Photo by John McColgan, of the Forest Service, an agency of the US

with some religious people not accepting evolution. Many politicians are not scientists or engineers and do not readily understand basic science which is quite worrying. Sometimes scientific progress and technology are almost considered a problem. But as with many things in life they can be used well and also badly. Politicians are in a difficult position in regards to climate change. If they propose some of the necessary changes in their manifestos, they may well not get elected.

Sustainability and climate change are often not key issues in elections. Witness the lack of success of the Green Party. We have to accept that sometimes we have to vote for measures that will cost us more but benefit future generations who will have to live with the consequences of our actions. Carbon emissions will be in the atmosphere for about 100 years and the oceans will go on expanding due to global warming for many years.

## Outlandish politicians are not new

Politicians making outlandish statements are not new. We need to get the message across and the 'truth' of science cannot be denied. This is not to say that science has all the answers. Scientists are themselves very sceptical and always questioning. Also, there are many things we do not know and will never know, but that is the excitement of science. There is still a lot of research to do on climate change.

**JM. As individuals, at home and in our neighbourhood, does what we do really make a difference? Some of our congregations have turned towards renewable sources of energy, avoiding fossil fuels, holding services on conservation themes, encouraging cycling and recycling.**

GL. What we do does only have a small impact. But if we do not act, how can we expect our brothers and sisters in China and India to reduce emissions? We can also exert pressure on our politicians, so these issues come more to the fore. Things

are happening slowly, we need to do a lot more. Part of this is helping developing countries to avoid building high-emitting economies.

## Poorest are worst affected by warming

One of my researchers from Burkina Faso has now become the energy minister in his country. He came back recently to meet people here with ideas and technologies that could help his country, one of the poorest in Africa. Its current population is 14 million. It will be 29 million by 2030. Few have access to electricity. Air conditioning accounts for 70% of total energy consumption in the built environment. This will increase as it is over the rest of the hot countries of the world. Often it is the poorest who will be affected by the global warming.

**JM. I hear you have been conducting services. Have you been preaching the Unitarian view of campaigns for clean fuels, affordable solar panels, opposing fracking? It could affect the way we vote in elections. I hardly dare mention Brexit. Do you avoid mixing politics and religion?**

GL. Yes, I have been conducting services and one of them is on climate change and loving our neighbours as ourselves. Much about dealing with climate change relates to ethics and the ethics of the Unitarian religion is what attracts me. I like discussing religion and politics as well as science and I often mention that I am a Unitarian.

The address I am working on at the moment is the importance and value of democracy; a legacy of the Judeo-Christian culture. It's still work in progress but the fact that a lot of early protestants started discussing the bible and speaking truth to power is an element of democracy, as is respecting other people's rights to hold different opinions. So, I accept the Brexit Referendum even though I am a passionate remainder who wants to improve the many faults of the EU from within. I hope for another referendum, as Parliament is likely to get gridlocked.

**JM. I also hear you have taken up yoga. Will that, or a spiritual discipline of some kind help us face the problems and help to sustain the planet?**

GL. I am doing yoga now, one of the few men in the class. There is no contemplation or meditating involved, it is purely exercise of the body.

## Older generation luckier than the young

I am very pessimistic about reducing our emissions and saddened that the UK government scrapped the zero-carbon regulation for new houses due for 2016. But the human population throughout history have had problems and challenges to deal with. I have never had to face the prospect of being killed, as my parents faced in World War II. My life has been much easier than theirs.

I and my generation are a lot luckier than the younger generation. But talking to young researchers in different countries gives me optimism due to their enthusiasm. There is also a culture now in education and beyond to consider the ethical side of issues, from economics to engineering. On a global scale the world is becoming a better place; better health, reducing absolute poverty *etc.* despite the atrocities that are happening in certain parts.



# Mutual improvement, but no doorstepping

Good wishes to Gavin Howell on taking up the role of GA Youth Co-ordinator. It's a post I might have considered at one time, but I've reached the age when I need to take the wise advice of the late Denis Norden. 'When talking to young people, beware of sentences that begin, "Now when I was your age..." and end with the words "...and that was a lot of money in those days!"'

I was reminded of this when browsing the *Newsletter* of Belper Unitarians. They enjoyed opening up for national Heritage Open Days. Their publicity person Jan Barrett reports that while looking for historical artefacts to display they 'found a metal box containing some beautifully hand calligraphed music in a book. It looks to be late 1700s or early 1800s'. I'm sure musicologists would be interested to view that. She adds: 'I found a book of Orders of Service dated 1892, where, in some of the prayers, mentions of "The Queen" were crossed out and "The King" written instead. The Queen, of course was Victoria.' They also retrieved 'some Treasurer's records from the 1950s. Did you know that it cost 9d (9 old pence) to have our windows cleaned in those days?'

\*\*\*

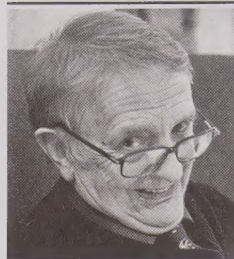
In the 19th century, Belper congregation had among its activities a Mutual Improvement Society. This term was new to me until I dipped into the history of our Pepper Hill Chapel in Shelf, which began as a 19th-century offshoot of our now closed Northgate End Chapel, Halifax. An enthusiastic Halifax member, Alexander Stradling, keen to take Unitarianism to the more remote Pennine villages, initiated a Mutual Improvement Society in the hamlet of Pepper Hill. The response was strong. They filled a rented room in a cottage, but soon built a Sunday School, opened in 1861. Mutual Improvement Societies were enormously popular at that time, especially in Methodist chapels. Stradling had a Methodist background. The subjects discussed were often political, especially socialism, there being fewer inhibitions about mixing politics and religion in those days. The schoolhouse trust, however, states its purpose as a place of worship and it soon evolved into a congregation, providing Sunday services and rites of passage.

Societies like this one declined after WW1. Stradling became a Unitarian minister, serving Burnley, Rawtenstall and later back in his home county, at Shepton Mallet in Somerset. Pepper Hill congregation survives, small in number, large in spirit. 'We are still improving!'

Do any other of our congregations have a Mutual Improvement Society, now, or in its background?

\*\*\*

I'm grateful for responses to this column in our *Letters* page, particularly those regarding two films about the Jehovah's Witnesses. My comments that theirs was a joyless religion were based on trying to imagine JW parents saying to their children, 'No. Unlike your non-JW friends, you will not receive Christmas gifts, nor go to parties, nor act in a nativity play or sing carols. No Christmas tree or decorations. Nothing on your birthday either. Nor will you participate in any social justice activities nor raise funds for any public charities. We don't do anything like that, least of all anything connected with international organisations, like United Nations.' And no, I don't envy them their apparent enthusiasm for evangelising, as I understand it is compulsory. I wonder if these correspondents



## Funny Old World

By John Midgley

have seen the films I mentioned, *Apostasy* and *The Children Act*. I have no desire for an anti-JW campaign, but I find it hard to see much joy or pastoral care in shunning family members who quit the organisation, to the point of refusing to eat at the same table as one's daughter. And I am glad that there is legislation to override their denial of blood transfusions to sick children.

\*\*\*

At the risk of appearing to be campaigning, I recently read *A Song for Issy Bradley* by former Mormon, Carys Bray. This astonishing novel takes us inside the day-to-day experience of a Mormon family. Supremely important for them is obedience: regular Monday Family Home Evenings, all-day Saturday preparations for Sunday, regular attendances at church, Sunday School, youth clubs, plus a monthly interview by a father of his children. All are vividly described. Marriage outside the Church is made extremely difficult. Mormon young people must marry and bear many children. An evening at the youth club, where girls must dress in their mother's wedding dress and make speeches in favour of marriage, is more or less compulsory. Marriage is for both this life and the afterlife, which begins at the Second Coming of Christ, for which they live in constant expectation. It all adds up to a pressure-cooker like existence as they wait, which is all very well until the pressure becomes intolerable. No mention in the novel of Mormon attitudes to homosexuality, but its negative view is well known. When tragedy strikes with the death of little Issy, then the pressure-cooker explodes. An engaging but uncomfortable novel. Again, by contrast, it helps illustrate the freedom which Unitarians take for granted.

\*\*\*

But no, I am not campaigning. No-one likes to think of a Unitarian being intolerant, but the question of the limits of tolerance needs to be revisited, frequently. There is too much anti-religious activity in the UK as it is. I learned recently of a government Places of Worship scheme which provides funding for security measures for religious institutions vulnerable to attack. 'A total of 45 places of worship have been awarded nearly £800,000 in the latest round of funding. This includes nine churches, 22 mosques, two Hindu temples and 12 Sikh Gurdwaras' (*Guardian*, 16 October).

I simply want readers to have some idea of the faith being brought to their doorsteps by evangelists. I'm glad the correspondents found the JWs friendly. Mormons on the doorstep seem amiable enough too, but do not offer them a cup of tea or coffee. Strictly forbidden. Meanwhile, I'm sure Gavin Howell won't pressurise Unitarian youngsters about marriage, or anything else.

*The Rev John Midgley is a retired Unitarian minister.*



# We need our own rainbow flag

Now you may remember me rejoicing in the Gay Pride marches which are absolutely brilliant. I am old enough to remember when homosexuals could be put in prison, and to remember the relief all round in 1967 when the act was repealed. To see the LGBT community confident enough to march through the streets, which they have been doing since 1972 and, gloriously, there seem to be more every year, is a source of great satisfaction to me.

It sounds, I suppose, rather silly to go on about people marching through the streets. But, I used to live in Bedford, which was richly multi-cultural/multi-ethnic/multi-religious, and I remember how wonderful it was when the Sikh community felt confident enough to march through the streets to celebrate Guru Nanak. And do not forget: Freedom of the City is an ancient honour granted to martial organisations, allowing them the privilege to march into the city 'with drums beating, colours flying, and bayonets fixed'. Thank you, Wikipedia.

Never mind martial organisations. I come from t'North and I can remember Whit Walks with splendid banners (did your church have a banner which took two strong men to carry and four more on guy ropes?) and any number of bands with drums beating and bugles blowing.

But the other brilliant thing that the LGBT community has done is to take the rainbow and turn it into a flag. So now lots of Unitarian churches are flying the rainbow-celebrating-diversity flag and some have even wrapped around an appropriate tree (thank you, HelenofNorwich).

But we don't just celebrate sexual diversity. We also celebrate religious diversity. You can summon that up easily lots of religious symbols.

But what we need is for someone to turn this into a flag with, perhaps, a flaming chalice at the centre. We can't have horizontal stripes because that has already been taken but how about lines radiating from the central chalice to the edge of the flag and a symbol in each sort of triangular shape? We'd have to work out appropriate colours but that shouldn't be too difficult.

And the other thing we celebrate is ethnic diversity for which there are no symbols. It is also very difficult because you could have 135 different ethnic groups or five. If we stuck with five we have:

- 1) American Indian or Alaska Native.
- 2) Asian.
- 3) Black or African American.
- 4) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.
- 5) White.

Or you could go for skin colour which gives us: – *natural beige, warm beige, tanned brown, creamy beige, arabesque, toasted tan, Caribbean tan, tan, beige, honey glow, warm brown, caramel, rich walnut, natural tan, creamy cocoa, dark cocoa, chocolate, dark chocolate* – and which does not include the horrible and inaccurate *white*. Yes, please, can I be a natural beige? Though I have to say that pink might just be more accurate. I should, of course, much prefer to be caramel. Now, surely someone could make up an absolutely lovely ethnic diversity flag with those colours but finding fabrics in which to wrap a tree might prove a little more difficult. If we reduced it to five, say beige, tan, warm brown, creamy cocoa



and dark chocolate would that be easier, Helen?

We are, of course, committed to sex equality which is easy peasy. We take the yin yang symbol and replace the dots with the Mars and Venus symbols.

(May I pause here to thank those who brought into being the green hymnbook? It was intended to be gender aware, few if any references to God the Father, brothers, men. Anyway, you behind it know who you are and I know who some of you are and when we next meet I shall buy you a drink and if I forget, remind me.)

So, have we got enough flags? No, we need one more. Possibly two. Or perhaps not flags, little plaques. Unitarians are very bad at celebrating people, significant people. Catholics are very good at this; they make them saints and have little niches in their churches where they place little plaster models. I don't want a niche but I might go for a couple of discrete plaques. One to Thomas Aikenhead who was the last person to be hanged for blasphemy in Great Britain. He could not in any way be described as a Unitarian, but you have to admire someone who in 1696 could say: 'That the Holy Scriptures were stuffed with such madness, nonsense, and contradictions, that he admired the stupidity of the world in being so long deluded by them: That he rejected the mystery of the Trinity as unworthy of refutation; and scoffed at the incarnation of Christ.'

The second to the utterly lovely and much too little remembered William Smith. Wikipedia again: *William Smith (1756–1835) was a leading independent British politician, sitting as Member of Parliament (MP) for more than one constituency. He was an English Dissenter and was instrumental in bringing political rights to that religious minority. He was a friend and close associate of William Wilberforce and a member of the Clapham Sect of social reformers, and was in the forefront of many of their campaigns for social justice, prison reform and philanthropic endeavour, most notably the abolition of slavery. He was the maternal grandfather of pioneer nurse and statistician, Florence Nightingale. In 1813 Smith challenged the established church, and was responsible for championing the Doctrine of the Trinity Act 1813, known as 'Mr William Smith's Bill', which, for the first time, made it legal to practice Unitarianism. He was a member of the Essex Street Chapel.*

*He also worked for the relief of Catholics.*

He was also, apparently, known for being a somewhat lengthy speaker.

'At length, when the candles burn low in their sockets, Up gets William Smith with both hands in his pockets, On a course of morality fearlessly enters, With all the opinions of all the Dissenters.'

(Continued on next page)



# Letters to the Editor

## Matthew verses don't endorse the Trinity

To the Editor:

Re John Watson's letter (*Inquirer*, 20 October)

Arguing about biblical texts isn't really something that Unitarians are into these days. Nevertheless, in the interests of accuracy, it should be pointed out that Matthew 28:19 only appears to be a Trinitarian proof-text for those who already hold a Trinitarian viewpoint.

In fact, nothing in the verse, either in English or the original Greek, states or even suggests that 'the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit' are the co-equal components of a triune God. It is also worth noting that this is the only place in the New Testament where it is said that baptism should be in these three 'names'. Elsewhere (e.g. Acts 2:38) Christian baptism is simply 'in the name of Jesus Christ', the latter word meaning 'the anointed one' or, possibly, 'messiah', but not 'God'.

**The Rev Cliff Reed**

Minister Emeritus  
Ipswich Unitarians

## A correction: Sheehan completed seminary

To the Editor:

Thomas Sheehan left the seminary at the age of 24, not in his late teens, as I wrote in *The Inquirer* (6 October). He presumably completed the full

training for the priesthood, but (with the seminary's agreement) he did not proceed to ordination.

Some 127 years ago James Martineau made much the same distinction that Sheehan makes between the religion of Jesus and the developed highly mythologised official Christianity. See p.650 of *The Seat of Authority in Religion*, 3rd edition 1891: *Christianity, as defined or understood in all the Churches which formulate it, has been mainly evolved from what is transient and perishable in its sources, from what is unhistorical in its traditions, mythological in its preconceptions, and misapprehended in the oracles of its prophets. From the fable of Eden to the imagination of the last trumpet, the whole story of the Divine order of the world is dislocated and deformed.*

Opponents of Martineau and Sheehan would say that they have not sufficiently allowed for the possibility that truths may be transmitted through mythology. Even so, mythology cannot be presented as factual history.

**Frank Walker**

Minister Emeritus  
Cambridge Unitarians

## A way to help tackle modern slavery

To the Editor:

Modern slavery is hidden in plain sight on our high streets. The National Crime Agency estimates that there are 11,700 people being exploited in the UK,

forced to work long hours for little or no pay and under threat of violence. Some of those people are being exploited in hand car washes, which in recent years have sprung up in their thousands across the country. Many of those hand car washes are legitimate businesses, but some are not. Police raids at hand car washes in towns and cities up and down the country have unearthed victims living in horrendous conditions, but there is recognition that there is far more exploitation happening than is currently being discovered. The Safe Car Wash 'phone app has been developed to help the public. It is a new tool that will enable widespread community intelligence gathering. Download the free app onto your smartphone and then, when you are using a hand car wash, simply complete the short survey about what you see of the people working at the car wash. The survey consists of a few questions related to the indicators of modern slavery and, if there is a high likelihood that modern slavery is occurring in the hand car wash, you will be asked to report your concerns to the Modern Slavery Helpline. (More information is online: <https://bit.ly/2mQF8No>)

**Paul Wheeler**

Unitarian General Assembly  
Penal and Social Affairs Panel

## Doris: Shouldn't we have a flag?

(Continued from previous page)

There are those, well-known among us, who are not usually brief in expressing their opinions in such gatherings as the General Assembly Meetings. I am suggesting that, in future, such people are challenged with cries of 'William Smith'.

Surely, surely, they are worth a little plaque. I am not asking that you leave flowers in front of them. After all it is not so long since we used to have little notices up in our churches saying: 'the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the leadership of Jesus, salvation by character, and the continuity of human development in all worlds, or, the progress of mankind onward and upward forever'.

We have recently been celebrating worthy women. Now at one time the only way to get a plaque celebrating your life stuck up on a church wall was to die. If you have any memorable members of either/any sex, do you have to wait for them to die before you put something up? And don't think that the plaque has to be permanent or the deeds great. There are possibly many churches where there should be a photo in the entrance lobby: 'Gladys Pocklington, member of this congregation who is responsible for the beautiful flower arrangements you will see here and has been for the last 30 years.'

OK, I'll shut up now.

*Dorothy Haughton is a Unitarian service leader living in Wales.*

## Inquirer letters policy

Letters should be succinct. It is preferable that they are sent by email to [inquirer@btinternet.com](mailto:inquirer@btinternet.com). Typewritten or legible handwritten submissions may be sent to the editor at 46A Newmarket Road, Cringleford, Norwich NR4 6UF.

Letters should be signed with the writer's full name and, if applicable, the name of the group or congregation with which the writer is affiliated. A postal address and telephone number are required, for verification purposes. Letters will be edited for length and content and may appear in an excerpted form. Any affiliations listed with letter writers' names are for identification purposes only.





edwards  
insurance  
brokers

# CHURCH INSURANCE

Specialist advice from Chartered Insurance Brokers

Working closely with a panel of specialist insurers, we do our utmost to ensure churches countrywide have the right insurance at the best possible price.

We have negotiated various free enhancements in cover with Congregational and Ansvar, exclusively for churches using our services.

We are proud to have recently been awarded the prestigious **Chartered Insurance Brokers** title by the Chartered Insurance Institute. This means we have satisfied rigorous criteria relating to professional qualifications and ethical good practice.

Currently, fewer than 200 UK Brokers have achieved this title, so you can be confident that you are dealing with one of the UK's leading firms, committed to providing you with the best possible advice, service and support.



The General Assembly, Essex Hall, The Nightingale Centre and the majority of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches are already seeing the benefits of our dedicated services at no additional cost to themselves, so **contact us today** to see how we can help you!

T: 01564 730 900 E: [church@edwardsinsurance.co.uk](mailto:church@edwardsinsurance.co.uk)

[www.edwardsinsurance.co.uk](http://www.edwardsinsurance.co.uk)

Stonebridge House • Kenilworth Road  
Meriden • CV7 7LJ

**We've moved**  
to a **bigger** office  
so that we can expand  
& maintain our **high**  
**service standards!**



# Library seeks Martineau images

By David Wykes

The Martineau Society recently held its annual conference at Dr Williams's Library when the opportunity was taken to hold a small exhibition of the oil paintings, watercolours, pencil drawings, and busts of James Martineau from the Library's collection.

The surprise was just how many images of Martineau the library holds. In addition to the fine oil painting by Alfred Edward Emslie which belongs to the Unitarian General Assembly, there are two drawings in pencil, three watercolours or pastels, two plaster busts, and a bronze maquette by Henry Richard Hope-Pinker of the monumental statute in carrara marble in the library at Harris Manchester College. Martineau is undoubtedly the best represented Unitarian of the 19th century. There are at least three major portraits in oils, 10 drawings in pencil, watercolour or pastel, six busts or statutes, and a wall mural which is now concealed.

There are also a great many commercially produced photographs. Many of the remaining images belong to Harris Manchester College, Oxford, including two of the three oil paintings. The third largest collection belongs to the National Portrait Gallery. There are good reasons why there are so many images of Martineau. He was a towering presence in late 19th-century philosophy as well as the Unitarian movement and he lived to a great age. He died in 1900 aged 94.

Many of the images were made in the last decade or so of his life, and most of the watercolours and pastels, which date from his final years, were drawn



*James Martineau, painted by Alfred Edward Emslie, in a portrait owned by the Unitarian General Assembly, published with permission.*

or painted by the very talented members of his family: his daughters Emily and Gertrude, and his daughter-in-law Clara, and their close friend Helen Allingham. They were all Unitarians. They are now recognised as an outstanding group of artists. The centenary of Martineau's birth was marked in 1905, particularly at Norwich, but also by a bas-relief and memorial in the Blackwater Street Chapel in Rochdale (now demolished). He had preached at the opening of the building in June 1857.

Martineau was a colossal intellectual presence in the late 19th century, yet since his death his philosophy has been out of favour and his theology is little considered by Unitarians. So much so that when the Martineau Society was formed in 1994 James was very much the junior partner to his elder sister Harriet Martineau.

As a result of the exhibition we are looking to record all the surviving images and photographs of Martineau. We suspect many congregations will have an engraving (possibly by Clara) or a photograph of Martineau. It may be there are more memorials in churches to Martineau than the tablet moved from Little Portland Street to Rosslyn Hill Chapel, Hampstead. I should therefore be grateful for any information on surviving images of Martineau, in both public and private hands, and if possible a digital image ([director@dw.ac.uk](mailto:director@dw.ac.uk)). In the meantime if anyone would like to see the exhibition please contact the Library at 14 Gordon Square WC1H 0AR (020 73873727).

*David Wykes is director of the Dr Williams's Library of Protestant Dissent.*

**FUSE**  
FESTIVAL of UNITARIANS in the SOUTHEAST  
**15TH-17TH FEBRUARY 2019**  
CHATSWORTH HOTEL  
17-23 The Steyne, Worthing BN11 3DU

FIND TIME FOR YOUR SOUL • INSPIRING WORKSHOPS

A WEEKEND BY THE SEA IN COMMUNITY

EXPLORE, DISCUSS, CREATE

Deadline for registrations Thursday 31st January  
[www.fusefest.org.uk](http://www.fusefest.org.uk)  
Guest speaker: Jennifer Kavanagh, Quaker, author and activist